

Met Office role in national resilience recognised

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The essential role the Met Office plays at times of severe weather and during related emergencies across the UK is being formalised today with the granting of Category 2 Responder status.

The change in status strengthens the Met Office role at the heart of the UK [resilience community](#), highlighting the significant work we already do to protect lives and property during periods of extreme weather and major incidents. It recognizes the Met Office as a key organisation in the planning and response to emergencies and incidents across the country.

Head of Situational Awareness at the Met Office, Will Lang, said: “We welcome the change to Category 2 Responder status. Weather and climate advice is becoming increasingly important to national resilience, particularly given the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather. This move is an important acknowledgement of our role as the UK’s National Weather Service recognising how vital the timely delivery of accurate weather forecasts and severe weather warnings are in protecting lives, livelihoods, and critical national infrastructure.

“We already work closely with Local Resilience Forums and emergency responders across the country, not only as emergencies unfold but we also play an important role during emergency planning and multi-agency training exercises helping highlight potential risks.”

As the official source of weather warnings to the public and emergency responders the Met Office has a dedicated team of [Civil Contingency Advisors](#) that provide 24/7 support to emergency responders, national and local government across the country during times of severe weather. Our Civil Contingency Advisors are often embedded in multi-agency resilience command centres and contribute to high level Government meetings during emergencies.

Environment Agency Director Incident Management & Resilience, Paul Clements, said; “The Met Office is an extraordinarily important partner for the Environment Agency. Communities and emergency responders across the country rely on us working seamlessly to help them prepare and react to environmental incidents, including through the services we deliver together in the joint Flood Forecasting Centre.

The Met Office is a trusted and critical part of the nation’s planning and response to the climate emergency, and it is right that the role we see our Met Office colleagues play day-in day-out, is now reflected in law.”

The types of incidents the Met Office commonly assist with include impacts from severe storms, tidal alerts, periods of extreme heat or cold, plume predictions (such as volcanic ash) as well as offering support to the agencies responsible for forecasting and responding to flooding. During the [unprecedented July heatwave](#) in the summer of 2022, the Met Office played a pivotal role in the run up to and during the event. We supported the Government, the NHS, local authorities’, emergency responders etc. with briefings and guidance.

Including the Met Office as a Category 2 Responder was recommended as part of a review of the Civil Contingencies Act in 2021 and recognises that the Met Office has a pivotal role to play in providing crucial advice and support when it comes to saving lives, protecting property and the economy during times of extreme weather. This change also recognises our work in partnerships with government and the civil contingency helping ensure effective action is taken when it matters.